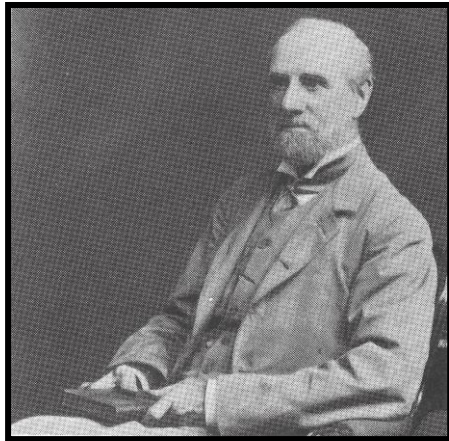


**Doctor John Harley (1833-1921)**  
**MD MRCS LSA FRCP**



Baptised: Stanton Lacy 8 July 1833  
Died: Pulborough 9 December 1921

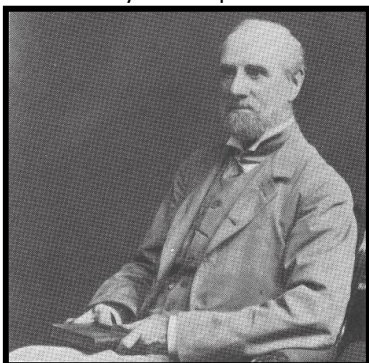
## Doctor John Harley MD MRCS LSA FRCP (1833-1921)

### 1. Introduction

John Harley was an apprentice to George Cocking at 45 The Bullring, Ludlow – this was no doubt where his interest in fossils and geology was nurtured. He later moved on to become a London physician finally retiring to Pulborough in Sussex where his interests turned to archaeology. He donated his geology collection to the Ludlow Natural History Society.

### 2. The Harley family

John Harley was baptised in St Peter's, Stanton Lacy on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1833 to John and Elizabeth Harley.



He was one of at least five children. First born Caroline Anne was baptised at St Lawrence's in Ludlow in 1828 with father John recorded as a publican in Broad Street. At the time of John Harley's birth in Stanton Lacy his father was a maltster, by the time last born Edward was baptised in St Giles at Ludford his father was a farmer at Foldgate.

John Harley senior died in 1838. By the 1851 census his mother Elizabeth was working as a schoolmistress, his sister Caroline Mary was working as a governess and John junior was apprentice to George Cocking.

*John Harley (Photograph: LMRS)*

### 3. Dr John Harley

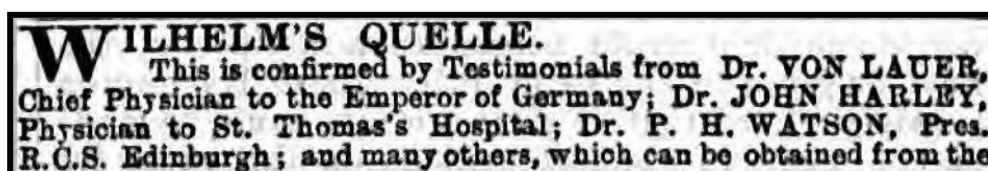
Harley's career as a doctor can best be summarised by his obituary:

*b. 1833 d. 9 December 1921  
MD Lond MRCS LSA FRCP (1867)*

*John Harley was born in Shropshire and received his medical education at King's College, London, qualifying in 1858. After holding house appointments at King's College Hospital, he was elected assistant physician in 1863, but left King's eight years later to take up the same post at St Thomas's Hospital where he was promoted to full physician in 1879 and created consulting physician in 1893. He also served on the staff of the London Fever Hospital. He delivered the Goulstonian Lectures at the Royal College of Physicians in 1868 and the Lumleian Lectures in 1889. Harley expounded views on the origins of certain diseases that were so entirely unwarranted by contemporary discoveries in pathology and bacteriology that he made no disciples and indeed lost both professional respect and actual practice as a result. His geniality, genuine as it was, became something of an easily caricatured joke, particularly his habit of smiling, bowing, and vigorously shaking hands on every possible occasion with every acquaintance that he met. Outside medicine, he was interested in botany and geology and left a collection of geological specimens to the Ludlow Museum. He died at Pulborough in Sussex.*

*G H Brown  
(The Lancet, 1921; Nature, 29 Dec. 1921; Lyle, 122; Parsons, iii, 219)*

Harley was also a strong promoter of Wilhelm's Quelle and other similar concoctions



#### 4. John Harley as a 'Fossil Hunter' and Geologist

Harley's left his geological collection to the Ludlow Natural History Society as recorded in the Minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1922:

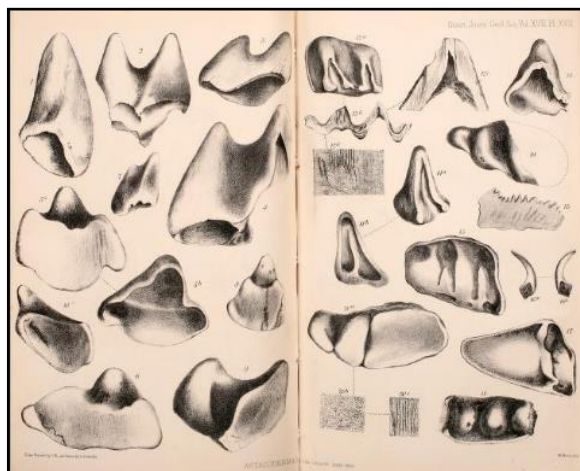
*I bequest to the Natural History Museum at Ludlow free of all duties all my geological specimens and the microscopic sections which I have made of them, my microscope and the appliances by Powell Lelands Rose and a legacy of one hundred pounds in aid of the erection of a suitable fire proof building for the housing and preservation of the contents of the museum.*

There are only a few 'John Harley' fossils to be found in La Touche's 1928 catalogue a number somewhat short of the 'gift of geological specimens' as noted in *The Lancet* above. The fossils listed in the la Touche catalogue are shown below:

##### Silurian

D/g/13	Trachyderra coriacea Phill.	Whitcliffe
D/g/16	Lingula lewisii Sow.	Whitcliffe
D/g/25	Polyzoa?	Whitcliffe
D/g/29	Stenopora fibrosa Goldf.	Whitcliffe
E/a/2	Bodies associated with Pteraspsis etc.	Hopton Gate
E/a/13	Pteraspsis) Scaphaspsis lloydii Agassiz	Hayton Bent

As to his wider geological interests, John Harley appears in print on at least two occasions. The first of two papers is entitled *Description of two Species of Cephalaspis* (QJGS 1859). This refers to his finding of a new Cephalaspis (*C. asterolepis*) at Hopton Gate four miles east of Ludlow. The paper also refers to *C. Salweyii* found by Humphry Salwey at Hinstone near Bromyard as named by Sir Phillip Egerton brother to Whitchurch conchologist William Egerton. It also mentions the finding of Silurian bodies, called *Coelolepidae* by Pander, between the jaws of *C Salweyii*.



The second longer paper was entitled *On the Ludlow Bone Bed and its Crustacean Remains* (QJGS 1861). This paper is referred to in a recent book *The Great Fossil Enigma* (Knell 2012) where the history of the Conodont animal is recorded from the finding of microscopic teeth by the Russian palaeontologist Heinz Christian Pander (1794-1865) to current thoughts as to its eel-like character.

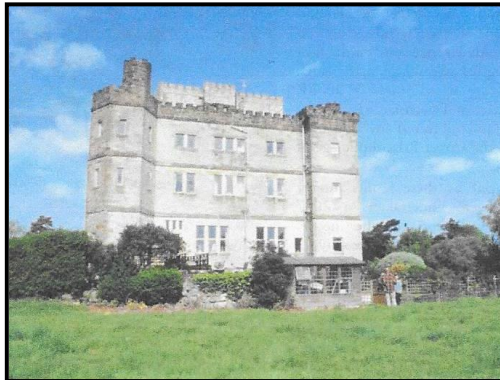
*Q. J. Geol. Soc. 1861 Pl. XVII*

John Harley had searched for crustaceans in the Ludlow Bone Bed and found minute bodies' similar to those found by Pander (some Pander specimens had been given to Harley by Huxley). But in his paper Harley assumed the remains to be of crustacean origin (pictured above) and he set up a new genus: "*Astacoderma is a name I would give this genus, in which I would also include*

*the whole of the so-called Conodonts, and thus give them at once a natural association, and a more appropriate name."*

In comparing Pander and Harley the author of the Great Fossil Enigma suggests that *'Harley was an entirely different type of naturalist: an enthusiast. Rather less well informed and as a result having a tendency to naïve assumptions and conclusions.'* Aspersions were being made as to Harley's efforts both as doctor and as an interpreter of fossils!

#### **4. Retirement**



Harley retired to Pulborough in Sussex where he built for himself a very substantial mansion. Known as 'Harley's Castle' it was located in an elevated position near to the village of Nutbourne - it is now referred to as Beedings Castle an 'historic 9<sup>th</sup> century castle' split into a number of expensive apartments.

*Photograph:  
The Beedings Castle Website*

Of more interest was the finding, when digging the foundations, of a substantial deposit of some 2,300 flint artefacts many deposited in the Farley cabinets. The flints were donated to the Barbican House Museum of the Sussex Archaeological Society on the death of John Farley but were later considered to be fakes and only some 200 were retained. They have recently been shown to be both genuine and of importance in that they date to at least 35,000 years ago and represent either an early colonisation of Britain by humans or occupation by technologically advanced late surviving Neanderthals (Pope 2008, Pope et al 2013).

#### **5. Family and death**

John Harley married Sophia Ellen Hadow in London in 1865. They had two daughters, Sophia Margaret and Mary Ellen. John Harley married secondly Maria Cooper in 1868. The second marriage yielded three daughters and a son John. The family moved to Pulborough in Sussex where Maria died in 1911 and John Harley followed in 1921.

Of the family Lieutenant John Harley of the Worcestershire Regiment was killed at Gallipoli on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1915 only four weeks after his marriage to May Winifred Sheppee daughter of Lieutenant Francis Faulknor Sheppee of the Royal Artillery. Phyllis Harley emigrated to the United States and sister Agnes may possibly have followed her- she is recorded as travelling to the United States on more than one occasion.

Dr. J. A Gosling  
July 2018

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Findmypast [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk)

**Appendix 1 The Harley Family**

John Harley 1795-1838 c. <i>Stanton Lacy</i> bd. 08.07.1838 <i>Ludlow</i>	m.	Elizabeth 1807-1862 b. <i>Ludlow</i> bd 24.11.1862 <i>Ludlow</i>		
 Caroline Anne 1828- c. 25.07.1828 <i>Ludlow</i>   m. Robert Phillips 16.04.1853 <i>Ludlow</i>	 Mary 1830- c. 16.02.1830 <i>St. Lacy</i>	 John 1833-1921 c. 24.07.1833 <i>St. Lacy</i> d. <i>Pulborough</i> 	 Elizabeth Mary 1836- c. 11.08.1834 <i>St Lacy</i>   m. Henry Smith Gough 08.08 1861 <i>Ludlow</i>	 Edward 1838- c. 08.08.1836 <i>Ludford</i>
m. (1) Sophia Ellen Hadow <i>Kennington</i> 1865 1833-1870 b. <i>Clifton</i> , d. 1870 <i>Marylebone</i>				
Sophia 1866- b. <i>Marylebone</i> ,			Margaret 1870-1905 b. <i>Marylebone</i> , d. <i>Pulborough</i> 1905	Mary Ellen 1870-1905 b. <i>Marylebone</i> , d. <i>Pulborough</i> 1905
m. (2) Maria Jane Shelton Cooper 3Q 1868 <i>Lambeth</i> 1837-1911 b. <i>Bromyard</i> , d. <i>Pulborough</i>				
 Lucy Maria 1874- b. <i>Marylebone</i>	 Agnes M 1875- b. <i>Marylebone</i>	 Phyllis 1878- c. <i>St Geo. Han. Sq.</i>	 John 1880-1915 c. <i>St Geo. Han. Sq</i> d. 04.06.1915 <i>Gallipoli</i>   m. May Winifred Sheppee Chelsea 08.05.1915	